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COVID Vaccine Trials Didn't Monitor Menstrual Changes. Researchers Say It's Part of a Bigger Problem. + More

The Defender's COVID NewsWatch provides a roundup of the latest headlines related to the SARS CoV-2 virus, including its origins and COVID vaccines. The views expressed in the excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender.

By The Defender Staff

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COVID Vaccine Trials Didn't Monitor Menstrual Changes. Researchers Say It's Part of a Bigger Problem.

NBC News reported:

> When women started reporting longer periods and heavier-than-normal bleeding after getting COVID vaccines last year, there was little data to back it up.
>
> Although they made up around half the participants in COVID vaccine trials, women were not asked about any menstrual changes as part of that process. Since then, several studies have revealed that COVID vaccines can indeed induce short-term changes in menstrual cycles.
>
> So a growing chorus of researchers is calling for further study of vaccines' effects on menstruation. Collecting this type of data during the COVID vaccine trials, they say, could have prevented distress among those who experienced abnormal changes to their cycles and assuaged fears about the shots at a time when misinformation abounded.
>
> In an editorial published Thursday in the journal Science, Dr. Victoria Male called on future trials to ask people about period changes and to take respondents seriously if they report such side effects.

Wuhan's Early COVID Cases Are a Mystery. What Is China Hiding?

The Washington Post reported:

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CDC, HHS Offer $1 Million for Research to Predict Vaccine 'Misinformation Trends'

Coca-Cola: American Academy of Pediatrics a 'Great Partner of Ours'

CHD Attorneys File Federal Lawsuit to Stop California Law That Punishes Doctors for COVID 'Misinformation'

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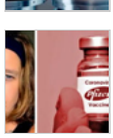
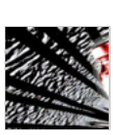

Exclusive: 'Even Taking a Shower Can Be Difficult' Says Man Injured by Pfizer Vaccine


Gardasil's Long Shadow of Autoimmunity Confirmed — Again — by New Study

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The story of how the pandemic got started — and turned into a global catastrophe — remains a black box. It should not be. The first cases could provide the most important clues about the origins of the virus, yet we know the least about them. They could show whether the outbreak began with a zoonotic spillover, perhaps from animals sold at the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan, China, or was an inadvertent research-related accident, such as a leak from a research facility in Wuhan.

The early cases could illuminate missteps in public health that allowed the virus to spread. They could point to failures in the early warning and surveillance systems, offering important lessons for the future. And knowing more about the early cases could reveal the extent to which China concealed vital information from the public when the outbreak might still have been brought under control.

The Beijing government has insisted the virus came from somewhere abroad, perhaps imported on frozen food. But the key to unlocking the origins lies within China. It is particularly important to discover how far and wide the virus spread in December 2019. The outbreak probably eluded detection at first, then was detected but not recognized as a new disease by doctors and nurses. After that, it was both detected and recognized, but the vital reporting was suppressed by Chinese authorities, both local and national.

To prevent the next pandemic, and to better understand this one, a serious, sustained and credible investigation is needed. What is China hiding?

Big Pharma May Have to Reveal Government Deals in WHO's Draft Pandemic Rules

Reuters reported:

Pharmaceutical companies could be made to disclose prices and deals agreed upon for any products they make to fight future global health emergencies, under new rules that would govern a World Health Organization-backed pandemic accord reviewed by Reuters.

A draft version of the WHO accord, which is being negotiated by the U.N. health agency's 194 member countries, calls for it to be compulsory for companies to reveal the terms of any public procurement contracts. It says that public funding for the development of vaccines and treatments should be more transparent, and include provisions to ensure that any resulting products are distributed evenly around the world.

The aim of the pact, commonly known as the pandemic treaty, is to prevent the next global health crisis from being as devastating as COVID-19 and to improve the global response that left many of the world's poorest countries behind.

During the pandemic, many deals governments made with pharmaceutical companies have been kept confidential, giving them little scope to hold drugmakers accountable.

Schools Struggle to Staff up for Youth Mental Health Crisis

Associated Press reported:

Mira Ugwuadu felt anxious and depressed when she returned to her high school in Cobb County, Georgia, last fall after months of remote learning, so she sought help. But her school counselor kept rescheduling their meetings because she had so many students to see. "I felt helpless and alone," the 12th grader later said.

Despite an influx of COVID-19 relief money, school districts across the country have struggled to staff up to address students' mental health needs that have only grown since the pandemic hit.

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Among 18 of the country's largest school districts, 12 started this school year with fewer counselors or psychologists than they had in the fall 2019, according to an analysis by Chalkbeat. As a result, many school mental health professionals have caseloads that far exceed recommended limits, according to experts and advocates, and students must wait for urgently needed help.

Data Du Jour: Rise in Mental Health Needs Persists

Axios reported:

> Nearly three years into the pandemic, demand for mental health services is swamping the psychology profession, according to a new report from the American Psychological Association.
>
> By the numbers: Nearly half of 2,300 psychologists surveyed said they were unable to meet the demand for treatment, while 60% said they have no more openings for new patients.
>
> Since 2020, diagnoses of trauma, obsessive-compulsive, substance-related and cognitive disorders continue to increase year over year, with more than a quarter of psychologists reporting an increase in patients experiencing persistent and severe mental illness.

There Might Be a Perfect Indoor Humidity to Curb COVID Spread

U.S. News & World Report reported:

> It's sort of like the Goldilocks principle — a room that's either too dry or too humid can influence the transmission of COVID-19 and cause more illness or death, Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers say.
>
> Maintaining an indoor relative humidity between 40% and 60% is associated with lower rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths, they reported on Nov. 16 in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface.
>
> Indoor conditions outside that range are associated with worse COVID outcomes, according to the report.
>
> The researchers aren't sure why indoor humidity might have such an influence over COVID's virulence, but follow-up studies have suggested that germs might survive longer in respiratory droplets in either very dry or very humid conditions.

COVID Variants BQ.1/BQ.1.1 Make up Nearly Half of U.S. Cases — CDC

Reuters reported:

> The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated on Friday that Omicron subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 account for nearly half of the COVID-19 cases in the country for the week ending Nov. 19, compared with 39.5% in the previous week.
>
> The proportion of the two variants, which are descendants of Omicron's BA.5 sub-variant, has risen to 49.7% of circulating coronavirus variants, around two months after they were initially detected.
>
> BQ.1.1 made up nearly 24.2% of circulating variants and BQ.1 was estimated to make up 25.5% of circulating cases in the week of Nov. 19, the U.S. CDC said.

Pfizer Says Omicron Booster Is Better Against New Subvariants Like BQ.1.1 Than Old Shots

CNBC reported:

Pfizer said its Omicron booster triggers a stronger immune response against a number of emerging COVID subvariants circulating the U.S.

The booster triggered more antibodies against Omicron sublineages BQ.1.1, BA.4.6, BA.2.75.2 and XBB.1 in adults older than 55 compared to a fourth dose of the original vaccines, according to new data released by the company on Friday. Antibodies are a key part of the immune system that blocks the virus from invading cells.

Pfizer developed its booster against Omicron BA.5 at the request of the Food and Drug Administration. BA.5 was the dominant strain of COVID in the U.S. over the summer but is now fading away as subvariants such as BQ.1.1. started becoming more dominant.

Cancer Diagnoses Lag After Screenings Fall During Pandemic, U.S. Study Finds

Reuters reported:

Screenings for a variety of common cancers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, potentially leading to diagnoses later in the course of the disease when it may be more difficult to treat successfully, U.S. data published on Thursday suggest.

In 2020 — the first year of the pandemic — average rates of screening for breast cancer fell by 40%, for cervical cancer by 36% and for colorectal cancer by 45%, compared to the three previous years, according to an analysis of medical claims data from 306 million adults.

Diagnoses of breast, cervical and colorectal cancers dropped by roughly 6% to 7% between 2019 and 2020 and by an additional 5% to 6% between 2020 and 2021, the researchers also found.

What to Know About RSV Vaccine Candidates and Monoclonal Antibodies

The Hill reported:

The medical community has been looking for ways to prevent severe disease from RSV for the past 50 years since the virus was identified. But it has faced obstacles in developing a vaccine. For one, efforts to do so stalled due to safety concerns after clinical trials for a vaccine candidate in 1966 resulted in exacerbated disease in participants who were naturally infected, and there were two deaths.

For another, as physician Dawn Nolt, professor of pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine, said in an email to Changing America, it is difficult to make something that is very safe in infants, who are most susceptible to RSV, and that stimulates their "immature immune systems" enough to protect them.

Despite those challenges, however, pharmaceutical companies now have multiple potential vaccines and treatments in development, spurred on by a scientific breakthrough in 2013 regarding a protein in the virus.

Pfizer has an RSV vaccine candidate in the pipeline that has been tested in maternal patients and older adults. AstraZeneca and Sanofi are jointly working on a monoclonal antibody treatment that could be given to infants and children to prevent severe disease. Meissa announced initial results from an intranasal vaccine for infants six months to 36 months old.

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drw22 · 14 days ago

"It is particularly important to discover how far and wide the virus spread in December 2019. The outbreak probably eluded detection at first, then was detected but not recognized as a new disease by doctors and nurses." - I know people in the U.S. who were sick with a weird illness that included sever long-lasting fatigue back in November 2019. Later, when so many were getting this 'new' virus, they realized that's what they had.

3 · Reply · Share ›

drw22 · 14 days ago

"COVID vaccines can indeed induce short-term changes in menstrual cycles". Except that short-term change is likely an indication of life-long infertility. They aren't going to do a study on that.

2 · Reply · Share ›

russell bowles · 12 days ago · edited

"HIDING???" They are hiding that if kingxi and dictator\/donald had everyone wear masks for four weeks we could have killed the trumpademic and saved a couple million lives and ten trillion dollars we could use to build green energy and leave oil and coal in the ground where it belongs... MakeAmericaGreenAgain/\MakeEarthGreenAgain

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GrouchyMathGrad · 12 days ago

From the first story: "So a growing chorus of researchers is calling for further study of vaccines' effects on menstruation. Collecting this type of data during the COVID vaccine trials, they say, **could have prevented distress** among those who experienced abnormal changes to their cycles and **assuaged fears** about the shots at a time when misinformation abounded."

No, checking for adverse events would have flagged some serious problems and kept the entire female population from having their fertility needlessly damaged, with unknown long term consequences.

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Voyt Regnal · 14 days ago · edited

re:Pfizer Says Omicron Booster Is Better...The booster triggered more antibodies "

Really?..here it is:

Antibody Responses to Omicron BA.4/BA.5 Bivalent mRNA Vaccine Booster Shot – Preprint:

"At ~3-5 weeks post booster shot, individuals who received a fourth vaccine dose with a bivalent mRNA vaccine targeting BA.4/BA.5 had similar neutralizing antibody titers as those receiving a fourth monovalent mRNA vaccine against all SARS-CoV-2 variants tested, including BA.4/BA.5. Those who received a fourth monovalent vaccine dose had a slightly higher neutralizing antibody titers than those who received the bivalent vaccine against three related sarbecoviruses: SARS-CoV, GD-Pangolin, and WIV1. When given as a fourth dose, a bivalent mRNA vaccine targeting Omicron BA.4/BA.5 and an ancestral SARS-CoV-2 strain did not induce superior neutralizing antibody responses in humans, at the time period tested, compared to the original monovalent vaccine formulation."

https://www.biorxiv.org/con...

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